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Item 113 of the provisional agenda*
Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. In its resolution 54/150 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit, through the Secretary-General, a report on the implementation of the programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People at its fifty-fifth session. The present report contains a summary of the activities relating to indigenous peoples undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner up to mid-July 2000.

Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights on a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people

2. The fifth session of the Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights on a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people was held at Geneva from 18 to 29 October 1999. No further articles of the draft declaration were adopted. The report of the Working Group is contained in document E/CN.4/2000/84. In 2000, the Working Group is scheduled to meet from 13 to 24 November; the dates are yet to be confirmed.

Seminar on the draft principles and guidelines for the protection of the heritage of indigenous people

3. From 28 February to 1 March 2000, a seminar was held on the draft principles and guidelines for the protection of the heritage of indigenous people, prepared by the Special Rapporteur, Erica-Irene Daes. The aim was to bring together experts

* A/55/150.

** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/248, sect. C, para. 1, this report is being submitted on 7 August 2000 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

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from indigenous peoples, United Nations agencies, Governments and academic institutions to review the draft principles and guidelines and, where necessary, to consider possible changes. A number of changes have been made to the draft principles and guidelines; a summary of the discussions and the revised draft text is contained in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/26.

Commission on Human Rights

4. The Commission on Human Rights held its fifty-sixth session from 20 March to 28 April 2000. The issue of indigenous peoples is attracting increasing interest from governmental delegations, and a number of issues were considered by the Commission, including the report of the Working Group on a draft declaration, the report of the Working Group on a permanent forum for indigenous people, and activities undertaken within the framework of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Resolutions were passed on all of those issues.

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

5. One of the highlights of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights was its decision to recommend to the Economic and Social Council the establishment of a permanent forum on indigenous issues.[1] Subsequently, the Council, by resolution 2000/22 of 28 July 2000, decided to establish the Permanent Forum as an advisory body with a mandate to discuss indigenous issues within the mandate of the Council relating to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. In accordance with that resolution, the Permanent Forum will be composed of 16 members, 8 of which are to be nominated by Governments and elected by the Council and 8 of which are to be appointed by the President of the Council on the basis of consultations. The Forum will report to the Council.

Working Group on Indigenous Populations

6. The main theme of the eighteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, held from 24 to 28 July 2000, was "Indigenous children and youth". The agenda also included the following items: review of developments, including land issues; standard setting activities, including a review of indigenous peoples; relationship with natural resource, energy and mining companies; World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; and International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Briefing meetings were scheduled by the World Bank, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The third meeting on indigenous peoples in wetlands was convened in cooperation with the Ramsar Bureau, the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. There were also informal briefings held on the World Conference against Racism and the World Summit for Children. Approximately 1,000 participants were expected to attend.

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

7. The International Day of the World's Indigenous People is officially proclaimed for 9 August. The United Nations Office at Geneva, however, organizes a special celebration during the session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations so as to take advantage of the presence of many indigenous people in the city. In 2000, the celebration took place on 27 July in the grounds of the Palais des Nations and consisted of cultural presentations by indigenous peoples from various parts of the world. The event was organized by indigenous fellows who had taken part in a six-month training programme in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The New York Office of the High Commissioner also convened a two-day meeting to celebrate the International Day on 9 and 10 August, in cooperation with United Nations agencies.

Indigenous fellowship programme

8. An indigenous fellowship programme was established in 1997 and, since that time, four indigenous persons have spent six months each year in the Office of the High Commissioner on a training course on human rights, which also includes training modules in many of the United Nations agencies, such as ILO, WHO, WIPO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and also at several non-governmental organizations. The programme gives indigenous individuals the opportunity to gain experience in human rights and the United Nations system and to serve as resource persons in their communities when they return. This year, the programme has indigenous fellows from Bangladesh, Canada, Nepal and Rwanda.

9. The fellowship programme was expanded, in collaboration with the Institute of Human Rights of the University of Deusto at Bilbao, Spain, which provided formal human rights training to indigenous fellows from Latin America (Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Peru). The fellows also spend approximately two months at the Office of the High Commissioner, gaining practical experience. The programme is extremely well received by indigenous peoples and the number of applicants far exceed the number of places available.

Technical cooperation programme

10. Efforts are being made to integrate indigenous issues into the technical cooperation programmes administered by the Office of the High Commissioner. At present, technical cooperation projects in Bolivia, Ecuador and Guatemala include specific activities that benefit indigenous people. These activities consist of training representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations and strengthening the capacity of state institutions responsible for the protection of human rights with a specific mandate for indigenous peoples. Discussions are under way to include an indigenous component in the technical cooperation programmes in Mexico.

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

11. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations was established by the General Assembly in resolution 40/131 of 13 December 1985 to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations by providing them with financial assistance, funded by means of voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organzations and other private or public entities. The Fund is administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and other relevant provisions, with the advice of a Board of Trustees appointed by the Secretary-General in consultation with the current Chairman of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. By resolution 50/156 of 21 December 1995, the General Assembly extended the mandate of the Fund to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the open-ended inter-sessional Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights on a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people and, by resolutions 53/130 of 9 December 1998 and 54/150 of 17 December 1999, extended it to the open-ended inter-sessional ad hoc Working Group of the Commission on Human Rights on the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system. By resolution 54/150, the Assembly encouraged Governments to support the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People by contributing to the Fund, together with other donors. A report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Fund and the activities undertaken with the resources of the Fund was submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session (A/53/282). The most recent report of the Secretary-General on the Fund is contained in document A/55/202.

United Nations Trust Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

12. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, the purpose of the Trust Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People is to fund projects and programmes during the Decade. The Fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities. In conformity with paragraph 23 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995, an advisory group, including indigenous people, was established to assist the coordinator of the Fund. The Advisory Group is at present composed of the members of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations (see A/55/202, para. 4) who are all indigenous experts, the Chairperson/Rapporteur of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and a United Nations expert who is specialized in project and programme management and appointed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights as Coordinator of the Decade. The most recent reports on the Fund are contained in documents E/CN.4/2000/85 and E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/2000/3. Information on the Fund is also available on the web site of the High Commissioner (*www.unhchr.ch*). Additional information can be obtained from the secretariat of the Fund, which is located at the Trust Funds Unit, Support Services Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva.

13. On the recommendation of the Advisory Group at an inter-sessional consultative meeting held in October 1999 and as approved by the High Commissioner in December 1999, the following four candidates are currently participating in the indigenous fellowship programme for 2000: Benon Mugarura (Rwanda); Sirjana Subba (Nepal); Mrinal Kanti Tripura (Bangladesh) and Brenda Odjick (Canada). On the recommendation of the Group at its fourth session, held on 15 and 16 April 1999, it has been possible to finance the indigenous fellowship programme within the regular budget in 1999 and 2000. The Advisory Group, at its fifth session held on 13 and 14 April 2000, emphasized the need for the indigenous fellowship programme to form an integral part of the United Nations human rights programme and, therefore, to be financed permanently under the regular budget of the United Nations. The Group took note of the agreement between the Office of the High Commissioner and the University of Bilbao, whereby four Spanish-speaking indigenous fellows previously selected by the Group would be able to participate in the indigenous fellowship programme at Geneva for two months in 2000.

14. Thanks to the contributions made by regular and new donors, sufficient funds were raised in 1999 to pay for all 24 project grants, amounting to a total of US$ 232,000, recommended by the Group at its fourth session in 1999 and approved by the High Commissioner for Human Rights (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1999/4, annexes II and III). Sufficient funding was also available in 2000 to pay for all 20 project grants, amounting to US$ 174,955 and including a contingency list, recommended by the Group at its fifth session in 2000 and approved by the High Commissioner (see E/CN 4/Sub.2/AC.4/2000/3, annex IV).

15. As a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 52/108 of 12 December 1997, the High Commissioner approved the recommendation of the Group at its third session, held from 2 to 8 April 1998, to hold a Workshop on Higher Education and Indigenous Peoples. The Fund contributed to the cost of the Workshop which was successfully held at San José from 28 June to 2 July 1999 (for the report, see E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1999/5). The Group expressed its warm appreciation to the Government of Costa Rica for having hosted the Workshop.

16. At its fifth session, the Advisory Group reiterated its strong support for the organization of a second workshop for indigenous journalist and the organization of two subregional seminars in Africa. Sufficient funds are available in 2000 to carry out these activities. The Group also strongly supported the organization of a workshop on indigenous children, to be held at Geneva prior to the session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in 2000, and recommended a grant of up to US$ 23,000 to assist the participation of representatives from indigenous communities and organizations in the workshop.

17. The following contributions to the Fund[2] were received during the period from 5 October 1999[3] to 30 June 2000:[4]

Donors	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Payment received on*	*Payment received at*	*Number of contribution*
Bolivia	1 000	20.10.1999	New York	1st
Cyprus	2 009	15.03.2000	Geneva	3rd
Denmark	129 381	11.04.2000	Geneva	4th
Estonia	9 596	10.01.2000	Geneva	2nd

Donors	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Payment received on*	*Payment received at*	*Number of contribution*
Germany	26 030	10.12.1999	Geneva	1st
Japan	35 000	29.02.2000	New York	5th
Norway	62 327	29.12.1999	Geneva	3rd
Sweden	36 876	28.10.1999	Geneva	2nd
	33 208	30.05.2000	Geneva	3rd
Erasmus Prize[a]	108 568	31.01.2000	Geneva	1st
Daniel Prémont	120	29.05.2000	Geneva	1st
Total	**444 115**			

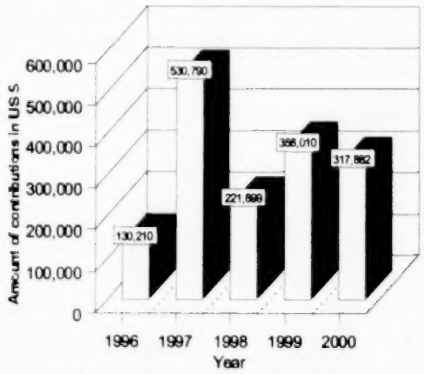
[a] The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Coordinator of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, received the Erasmus Prize, awarded by the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation for a person or institution that has made an exceptionally important contribution to European culture, society or social science, and decided to give part of it to this Fund.

18. The following pledges remained outstanding as at 30 June 2000:

Donor	*Amount (United States dollars)*	*Pledged at*	*Local currency*	*Date pledged*
Chile	5 000	New York		23.11.1999
Netherlands	101 051	Geneva	212 000 (guilder)	25.11.1999
New Zealand	12 136	Geneva		19.04.2000
Tunisia	951	New York		4-5.11.1998[a]
Total	**119 138**			

[a] Pledge made during the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities.

19. Thanks to new donors and the sustained contributions from regular donors, sufficient funds are available for 2000 to implement all envisaged activities. The following chart shows the development of contributions[2] to the Fund from 1996 to June 2000:



Source: A/54/487/Add.1 and table above.

The cost plan for 2001 prepared by the Secretariat in October 1999 amounts to a total of about US$ 400,000 for project grants to indigenous organizations and communities, and for workshops and seminars on indigenous issues. The Commission on Human Rights, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 2000/56 of 25 April 2000,[5] and the General Assembly, in paragraph 11 (d) of its resolution 54/150, appealed to all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to contribute to the Voluntary Fund. Interested donors are invited to pay their contributions before the next session of the Advisory Group (April 2001) so as to enable the Fund, the Advisory Group and the Coordinator of the Decade to fulfil their mandates.

Inter-agency consultation

20. An inter-agency consultation on indigenous peoples was held on 21 July 2000, with the participation of representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations Development Programme, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, ILO, WHO, WIPO, and the World Bank and of the Permanent Missions of Denmark and Canada. The consultation has been organized by either ILO or the Office of the High Commissioner for the past ten years and provides an opportunity for an informal exchange of information between the staff working on indigenous or related issues. It has proved to be helpful in strengthening cooperation at the working level within United Nations organizations. In the light of the decision by the Economic and Social Council to establish the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, participants agreed that future meetings would need to be structured more formally so that the United Nations system could properly support the objectives of the Forum, in particular that part of its mandate aimed at improving cooperation among the different programmes and departments of the United Nations. It was also considered that the Forum might be serviced from within the system, especially by means of comprehensive research and background papers provided by United Nations organizations on areas within their competence.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 3* (E/2000/3), chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution 3.

[2] According to official receipt vouchers available at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

[3] For contributions up to 4 October 1999, see A/54/487/Add.1, annex, table 1.

[4] Date of preparation of the present report.

[5] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2000, Supplement No. 3* (E/2000/3), chap. II, sect. A.